

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions and listing of the claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A ball ~~Ball~~ retrieval device for ball games ~~where~~ in which a playing ball is attached to a rubber-elastic thread element, ~~more particularly a rubber thread,~~ wherein said rubber thread is retained in a thread storage device comprising the following parts:

a spool including a recovery element capable of being tensioned through rotation of the spool,

a carriage that is displaceable in the longitudinal direction of the spool, including a device for guiding said ~~rubber~~ thread element, and

a driving device of the carriage that is operatively connected to said spool in order to move the carriage in synchronicity with the rotational movement of said spool,

so that the ~~rubber~~ thread element wound up on said spool is capable of being unwound while tensioning said recovery element and of being automatically rewound on said spool while untensioning said recovery element, the winding operation being controllable by said device for guiding ~~device in said carriage,~~

wherein said driving device is equipped with at least one driving roller extending into a helical recess, thereby

allowing to produce, during the rotation of said spool, a longitudinal movement of said carriage in synchronicity with a pitch of said helical recess.

2. (currently amended) The ball retrieval device of claim 1, wherein said device for guiding ~~device~~ comprises a deflecting arrangement providing a deflection of the course of said thread element from the tangential direction at an angle close to 90° with respect to the longitudinal axis of said spool for winding and unwinding, to a direction essentially parallel to the longitudinal axis of said spool, by means of at least one ~~and preferably exactly one~~ deflecting pulley.

3. (currently amended) The ball retrieval device of claim 1, wherein said ~~spool includes a groove-shaped~~ helical recess has a ~~in its surface whose~~ width that essentially corresponds to the diameter of said thread element such that said thread element is capable of being inserted in said helical recess essentially without play.

4. (currently amended) The ball retrieval device of claim 1, wherein the bottom of said helical recess is essentially polyhedral in cross-section with straight or bent edges, ~~more particularly comprising at least one and preferably at least two vertex line(s) extending in the longitudinal direction of said helical recess.~~

5. (currently amended) The ball retrieval device of claim 1, wherein bar-shaped guiding elements are arranged along said spool on which said carriage is smoothly displaceable, ~~more particularly by means of rollers and/or slide bushes,~~ thereby allowing ~~[[it]]~~ said spool to be moved to the current winding or unwinding location of said thread element on or from said spool with low resistance.

6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) The ball retrieval device of claim ~~[[6]]~~ 1, wherein at least one first driving roller is arranged such that it engages in a section of said helical recess containing no thread element, and a set of rollers composed of at least one second driving roller, ~~preferably of two to three second driving rollers,~~ of a smaller diameter relative to said first driving roller, said second driving rollers being disposed above a section of said helical recess in which said thread element is wound up.

8. (currently amended) The ball retrieval device of claim 1, wherein a brake device for said spool is provided near at least one end position for said carriage, said brake device comprising ~~essentially consisting of~~ a brake support and ~~[[of]]~~ an impact element, said brake support comprising a brake element capable of being pressed on said spool and being displaceable relative to said impact element in the longitudinal direction of

said spool, and said impact element comprising a pressure means in operational connection with said brake element such that when said carriage meets said brake support, the latter is movable towards said impact element, whereby said brake element is pressed onto said spool by the pressure means in said impact element in order to brake said spool.

9-14. (canceled)